

**REVISED 7-12-10**

## **COUNCIL RULES**

**2008-2012**

I. The Council President shall preside at Council meetings. The Council shall designate a member as the Presiding Officer Pro-Tem, otherwise known as the Majority Leader. In the absence of the Council President, the Majority Leader shall preside. If both are absent, a Presiding Officer shall be appointed by the Council President or Majority Leader from among the Council membership. Should either fail to appoint a Presiding Officer, an acting Presiding Officer shall be selected by the Council from among its own membership. A salute to the flag and a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance shall precede the commencement of all Court of Common Council meetings.

Pursuant to Chapter IV, Section 5 of the City Charter, the Council shall meet regularly on the second and fourth Monday evenings of each month at seven o'clock p.m., except that its rules may provide for only (1) regular meeting in each of the months of July and August. Said regular meeting to be held on the second Monday evening of each of those two months at 7 p.m.

II. A quorum will consist of at least five members of Council.

III. It shall be the responsibility of the Council's Presiding Officer to preserve order and decorum at all meetings and to take such steps as are necessary to maintain order so as to facilitate the procedures of Council business. The Presiding Officer may speak on all questions without thereby losing the right to vote and shall decide questions of order subject to appeal to the Corporation Counsel.

IV. When any member desires to speak he or she shall raise his or her hand to draw the attention of the Presiding Officer and upon receiving the floor shall confine himself or herself to the question under debate and avoid personalities or imputing improper motives to any member. Speaking time shall be limited to three (3) minutes with one (1) minute for rebuttal.

V. The order of business shall be:

- (a) Action on the records of the previous meeting.
- (b) Public Hearings.
- (c) Motion to place resolutions on the Consent Calendar.
- (d) Communications.
- (f) Reports of Committees.
- (g) Action on agenda items previously presented.
- (h) New business/resolutions.

VI. When a motion is made and seconded, it shall be re-stated by the Presiding Officer; and, if it is made in writing, it may be read before being debated. Every motion shall be reduced to writing if the Presiding Officer or any member so desires.

VII. The mover of a question may withdraw his motion at any time before a decision or amendment. When a question has been decided, it shall be in order for any member in the prevailing vote to move the reconsideration thereof at the same meeting or at the next succeeding regular meeting. It shall not be in order for a member who abstained on a vote to later move reconsideration pursuant to this rule.

VIII. When a question is under debate, no motion shall be received except a motion to adjourn, to table, to call the previous question, to postpone to a day certain, to commit or to amend. Those several motions shall have precedence in the above order. A motion to adjourn or to recess shall always be in order. A motion to table or calling for the previous question shall be decided without debate. A motion to table an ordinance shall be by roll-call vote with the results reported in the Council Journal. A motion to table a resolution will be accepted without roll-call unless there is an objection.

IX. There shall be the following Standing Committees:

1. Education
2. Legislative Affairs
3. Health and Human Services
4. Housing
5. Labor and Workforce Development
6. Operations, Management and Budget
7. Planning and Economic Development
8. Public Works, Parks and Environment
9. Quality of Life and Public Safety
10. Committee of the Whole

The Council shall appoint all committees or subcommittees, and no committee or subcommittee created by Council shall have authority to create its own subcommittees or sub-subcommittees. The Council may from time to time appoint special committees for the purpose of holding public hearings on any matter and for such other purposes as it may designate. A quorum rule of two (2) Council Members is applied to all standing committee, special committee and subcommittee meetings.

Any elected City official who attends a Committee meeting shall have the right to participate in the Committee's discussion whether or not the official is a member of the Committee.

There shall be opportunity for public participation at every Committee meeting, except that such participation at a meeting of the Committee of the Whole shall be at the discretion of the Committee Chairperson.

1. All Education Committee meetings will be held on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 5:30 P.M. in the Council Chambers.
2. All Legislative Affairs Committee meetings will be held on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers.
3. All Health and Human Services Committee meetings will be held on the first Monday of each month at 5:30 P.M. in the Council Chambers.
4. All Housing Committee meetings will be held on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 P.M. in the Council Chambers.
5. All Labor and Workforce Development Committee meetings will be held on the third Wednesday of each month at 5:30 P.M. in the Council Chambers.
6. All Operations, Management and Budget Committee meetings will be held on the Thursday immediately following the first regularly scheduled Council meeting at 5:30 P.M. in the Council Chambers.
7. All Planning and Economic Development Committee meetings will be held on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers.
8. All Public Works and Parks Committee meetings will be held on the fourth Thursday of each month at 5:30 P.M. in the Council Chambers.
9. All Quality of Life and Public Safety Committee meetings will be held on the third Tuesday of each month at 5:30 P.M. in the Council Chambers.
10. Committee of the Whole meetings will take place in accordance with Rule XI.

Committee Chairpersons reserve the right to hold Committee meetings throughout the community with proper notice to the Town and City Clerk's Office and the community.

Committee meetings will be convened at the discretion of the Chairperson.

The agenda for each regularly scheduled meeting of a Standing Committee shall be delivered to the Mayor, the Town Clerk and all Council Members at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

The agenda shall include all items referred from the previous Council meeting and any item filed by a Committee Member with the Chairman at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled Standing Committee meeting.

The appropriate Chairperson in concurrence with the majority of the Committee Members will announce said time in their Committee meeting notice.

Any regularly scheduled Standing Committee meeting falling on a legal holiday, or the evening before a holiday, or on an evening when a Council meeting has been scheduled by operation of law shall be rescheduled for the first evening thereafter.

A special meeting of a Standing Committee can be called upon no less than 48 hours notice by the Chairperson filing a written notice of the meeting with the Town Clerk and mailing a notice to all proper persons. The Chairperson may not file such a notice until he or she has the approval of at least one other Committee Member, and the Chairpersons shall call the meeting on behalf of all those who consented. Should at least three (3) Committee Members request a special meeting, the Chairperson shall file a notice and call a meeting at their request.

All reports of Committees appointed by the Council shall be in writing. Assistance to each Standing Committee for the purpose of preparing reports shall be provided by City staff. Reports shall include general information on the subject matter, a brief summary of discussion, the proposed action, and the Committee vote.

X. By vote of five (5) Members of Council, a Committee may be discharged from reporting or acting upon an item. An item so discharged may be voted upon by Council.

XI. There shall be a Committee of the Whole comprised of the entire Court of Common Council. The Committee of the Whole shall meet at 6:00 p.m. and end at 7:00 p.m. at the first regularly held Council Meeting of each month for the purpose of taking public comment on issues of interest to the community. Additional meetings of the Committee of the Whole may be called at the discretion of the Council President, or by any three (3) Council Members but with no less than 48 hours notice filed with the Town Clerk. The Council may invite the Mayor at appropriate times to discuss policy matters or other issues needing attention.

In addition when a nomination has been made by the Mayor for the position of department head and a resume or other forwarding information has been presented to the Council for its consideration, the President of the Council shall convene a Committee of the Whole within fifteen days of the nomination, according to the rules of the Court of Common

Council, to which the nominee for a department head position is invited to appear and be heard. The purpose of the Committee of the Whole will be to provide members of the Court of Common Council the opportunity to ask any questions bearing upon the qualification, experience, or any other information of use in making a decision concerning the appropriateness of the nominee for the position. The Committee of the Whole shall then vote either recommending or not recommending the nominee. The nominee will then be presented for confirmation or non-confirmation at the next meeting of the Court of Common Council.

Furthermore, when a nominee has been chosen by the Mayor for a position on any Board or Commission and a resume or other forwarding information has been presented to the Council for its consideration, the nominee's name will be presented to the Court of Common Council, which may refer the nominee to the appropriate Council committee for consideration. In the event a nominee is sent to committee for consideration, the nominee will be interviewed according to the rules of that committee and a vote taken by the committee either recommending or not recommending the nominee. The nominee shall then be presented for confirmation or non-confirmation at the next meeting of the Court of Common Council

XII. The Clerk shall prepare, maintain and have printed an adequate Journal of the proceedings of the Council. He shall not be required to include speeches.

XIII. The latest published edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, shall be parliamentary authority in the Council except as otherwise provided in these rules. Interpretation of Council and other rules shall be the responsibility of the Corporation Counsel.

XIV. Any of the rules of the Council may be suspended unless three or more members shall object, however the provisions of Rule XIII and Rule XVI may be suspended only by unanimous consent of all voting members of the Council.

(a). Rule XIV of the rules may be suspended by an affirmative vote of four (4) members of Council for the sole purpose of accepting an item submitted by Corporation Counsel on to the Council agenda concerning pending litigation that requires immediate consideration by Council. The Council rules shall be suspended only for the item submitted and Council rules shall remain in effect for all other agenda items.

XV. Amendments to these rules shall be submitted in writing at any meeting of the Council, and shall be adopted only by an affirmative vote of at least five members of the Council no later than the second succeeding regular meeting.

XVI. No matter requiring action by the Council shall be considered unless the written document initiating the matter has been filed with the Clerk on or before twelve o'clock noon on the Wednesday preceding the day of the meeting at which the matter is

introduced. If Wednesday is a holiday the deadline will be moved to twelve o'clock noon on the next business day. Only items submitted by the Mayor, Court of Common Council, Chief Operating Officer, City Departments and other elected City Officials shall be submitted for the Council meeting.

All members of the Council shall be promptly notified by the Clerk of the nature of any documents filed with him on or before 4:30 p.m. on the day following the deadline for filing. The Clerk shall furnish each Councilman, the Mayor, and the Corporation Counsel, a package containing all agenda backup material.

Furthermore, one additional package shall be provided for the press and the public, and it shall remain available for public use, inspection and copying in the Council Conference Room. Furthermore, for an annual fee of \$150.00 paid to the Town Clerk, any individual or organization may receive the full set of agenda packages for one year.

This Council Rule shall not be suspended except in the case of an emergency. "Emergency" shall be defined, for the purposes of this Rule, as a matter that must be considered by the Council for the immediate preservation of (1) the public peace, health and safety; or (2) the fiscal stability of the City, including the position of the city in litigation matters.

XVII. At 7 p.m. on the third Monday of each month, or such other times as the Council may from time to time designate, where required, hearings will be held by Council members on all matters requiring public comment. If the third Monday falls on a holiday, then said hearings shall be held on the next business day.

The hearings on the third Monday of each month shall be conducted by a Committee of five Council members under an alphabetical assignment with the first-named Council member alphabetically to be Chairperson. In alphabetical sequence, the personnel of the Committee will rotate among all Council members for these hearings.

Public Hearings shall be conducted in accordance with the following procedures:

Each person wishing to address the Council or Committee thereof shall, upon recognition by the Presiding Officer, give his or her name, address, and if he or she represents a group shall, in addition, state for the record, the name and address of said group or organization, shall limit his or her remarks to five minutes.

All remarks shall be addressed to the Council as a body and not to any member thereof.

All remarks shall be limited to present or proposed City of Hartford policies, budget, ordinances or resolutions.

Any person making personal, impertinent or slanderous remarks or who becomes boisterous while addressing the Council, shall be forthwith barred by the Presiding Officer from further audience at said meeting unless permission to remain is granted by a two-thirds vote of the Council Members present and voting.

During the Public Hearing, there shall be no debate by the Council, although questions may be asked by Council of persons making such presentations.

XVIII. Any member of the Council may offer a motion to place resolutions on the general Consent Calendar. Any such motion shall designate those resolutions which the mover believes will not be subject to opposition or debate and which the mover desires to have acted upon on the Consent Calendar. If any Council member shall object to the placing of a resolution or resolutions on the Consent Calendar, then such resolution or resolutions shall not be placed on the Consent Calendar and shall be acted upon in the normal manner.

At any appropriate time, any member of the Council may move for adoption of all resolutions on the Consent Calendar. If such motion has been properly seconded, the Council President shall then direct the Clerk to take a single roll-call vote in regard to all resolutions on the Consent Calendar. The votes of the members of the Council on the motion for adoption of all resolutions on the Consent Calendar are deemed and shall be construed to be the votes of the members of the Council on each such resolution as if each such resolution had been the subject of a separate roll-call vote, except any member may request the Clerk to record such member's vote as an abstention on any resolution or resolutions if such member so desires.

Additionally, any resolution or ordinance vetoed by the Mayor shall be automatically placed on the next regularly scheduled Court of Common Council meeting agenda by the Town Clerk, introduced by the original sponsor.

Before any proposed ordinance can be placed on any agenda for consideration by the Council, such ordinance should be submitted for review and approval as to form and legality by the Office of Corporation Counsel.